Terms of Reference

External Mid-Term Review of the Project ''Inclusive PPA- Business Model for Developing Underutilised Plants to Improve Food Security in Zimbabwe'

1.0. Introduction: Background

This document defines the Terms of Reference for the external mid-term review of the project 'Inclusive PPA- Business Model for Developing Underutilised Plants to Improve Food Security in Zimbabwe'.

The project is an innovative approach to food security, funded by USAID and EC for implementation through the partnership of HWA (Hilfswerk Austria International Zimbabwe), BIZ (Bio-Innovation Zimbabwe), and KAITE. It is running from October 2011 until December 2014, and aims at commercialising various plant species (i.e. baobab and marula) in dryland areas of Zimbabwe for the local and global food, medicinal and cosmetics industry. It also looks at diversifying agricultural activities with high value crops such as chillies, rosella, cornflower or safflower. The goal is to create alternative income opportunities for 4000 smallholder farmers in Natural Regions 4 and 5 of Zimbabwe.

The *overall objective* is to contribute towards the sustainable reduction of hunger and poverty in Zimbabwe through the increased production and marketing of underutilised plants and high value crops.

The *specific objective* of this project is to explore and demonstrate the potential of underutilised crops to strengthen food security and livelihoods for vulnerable households in regions 4 and 5 of Zimbabwe.

Result 1 - High value and indigenous crops with commercial potential are identified: As a lot is already known about high value crops, the identification of the high value species with commercial potential can be done relatively quickly. When it comes to the under-utilised species, some more research is necessary. Having mapped the shortlisted species, a preliminary attempt is made at identifying the steps required to bring each species through to full commercialisation.

Result 2 - Marketable products developed and launched from targeted species: Building on the outputs of the short-listing exercise, a detailed gap analysis is undertaken on each of the 10 shortlisted species to identify the research and development gaps between what has currently been done and what needs to be done in order to develop marketable products. Once the research gaps have been filled, product development work will take place in conjunction with relevant private sector partners. Once the product development work is complete, the product would then be launched on the market.

Result 3 - Enduring commercial demand has been created for the identified species: The market development process starts with an understanding of the market. In conjunction with the process of identifying and developing links to relevant market partners, there is a strong need to raise consumer awareness about the products and their benefits. The final step would then be to undertake a branding and product positioning exercise, leading to the actual product launch on the market. Once the products have been launched, follow-up sales support and advice will be given to ensure that sales momentum continues to build.

Result 4 - Small-scale producers are actively engaged in efficient and biodiversity-friendly harvesting, production and processing of new crops from high value and under-utilised species: Once the market opportunity starts to emerge, the project will begin work with the minimum 4,000 households who will become the eventual producers. Some of the training and capacity-building will be generic, looking at broad conservation agriculture techniques, as well as community organisational dynamics and relevant topics of general importance (e.g. HIV awareness etc).

Result 5 - Knowledge is collected and disseminated through appropriate fora: Particular use will be made of virtual/electronic media (e.g. blog sites, You tube sites, Facebook sites etc), but more conventional media will also be used where appropriate. Finally, the knowledge will be disseminated through relevant channels.

2.0. Objective and justification of the mid-term review

The primary objective of the mid-term review is to assess the progress of the project against targets at an outcome level so as to

- examine and provide feedback on the implementation processes and determine the extent of results achieved so far
- help to identify obstacles to performance, provide recommendations and possible changes to improve achievement of set targets / results
- and to learn about the achievements and lessons learnt so far.

3.0. Scope of the mid-term review

In order to meet the objectives specified above, the external evaluator will:

- evaluate the outcomes of the project against baseline values and Logframe indicators of 2011-14, assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the project's methodology at reaching anticipated results and objectives
- assess effects of the project on all beneficiaries and their communities
- identify and highlight the main areas of success and failures, and draft best practices, lessons learned and recommendations for improving the remaining phase of project implementation and for future projects.

4.0. Approach and methodology

Based on best practices for evaluation methodology, the external evaluator is required to propose an approach for conducting this review. As such, the following issues must be taken into consideration:

- Choice of appropriate data collection tools that could include key informant interviews, focus group discussions, household interviews and field visits. All data collected must be disaggregated by sex and age.

- A detailed action plan that includes data collection instruments, clear roles and responsibilities of the participants and the external evaluator, logistical arrangements, timeframe and data synthesis and analysis.

5.0. Mid-term review criteria

The evaluation should focus on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and program management and administration of the project. The following questions should be addressed under each criterion:

a. Relevance

- How is the program addressing the needs of the communities in which it is being implemented? Are the objectives and achievements of the program still consistent with the needs and priorities of the stakeholders and beneficiaries?

- Are the objectives of the program consistent with the laws and regulations policies of the local authorities? To what extent has the project complied with the development plans and strategies of the Government of Zimbabwe?

- How is the project contributing to poverty reduction?

b. Effectiveness

- Are program activities being implemented as planned and within budget? Is the quality and quantity of the produced outputs and outcomes in accordance with the proposed project plans?

- To what extent has the program achieved its purpose or is it on track to do so in the future?

- How effective/efficient has been the novel approach of a Public-Private Partnership (i.e. an NGO delivering through the private sector) for achieving the overall goal so far? What is its future potential for the project and for the development sector as a whole?

c. Sustainability

- Are there any discernible factors that may enhance or inhibit sustainability of outcomes? Can any critical factors for potential sustainability be already identified?
- What are the possible factors that enhance or inhibit sustainability, including ownership/commitment, economic/financial, institutional, technical, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability aspects?
- Will the benefits produced by the program be maintained after the termination of external support? How has the approach of a Public-Private-Partnership so far influenced the sustainability of the program?

d. Efficiency

- How well have the program activities transformed the available resources into the intended results in terms of quality, quantity and timeliness and in terms of the target beneficiaries? Has the technical assistance provided by the three implementing partners been delivered in a timely and cost-effective way?
- To what extent has the program exploited synergies among partners and their respective competencies?
- Is there a proper monitoring system in place, which is organized according to the logical framework and its indicators? Do the monitoring or other reports give adequate qualitative and quantitative information on the progress made and on budget used?

e. Project progress and impact (outcomes)

- What project outcomes have been achieved to date as detailed in the project proposal and the Project Implementation plan?
- What is the level of ownership/commitment of the project by the participating beneficiaries?
- What is the sustainability of the project's outcomes?

f. Economic value chain development of the project

- What is the overall value generated by the development of the different species so far and what is its potential until the end of the project and within the following 10 years?
- Have there been any business spin-offs resulting from this project? How has the project been impacting the private sector development as a whole in the country?
- What are the main challenges / strengths / opportunities of the private sector partners involved in the program? Have expectations of the private sector partners been met so far? If yes, how? If not, why?

6.0. Time Frame

The evaluation is expected to take place in August / September 2013 (field visits and data collection). The final report is expected by mid-September 2013.

7.0. Deliverables

An external evaluation report not exceeding 20 pages should be produced with the following:

- The inception report describing all sections and proposed detailed methodology for review and approval.

- A comprehensive analytical report in English. The report should, as a minimum, include the following contents:

1. Cover Page
2. Abbreviations and acronyms
3. Executive summary
4. Background and operating environment
5. Description of evaluation goals and objectives, evaluation methodology, data collection tools and data analysis process
6. Presentation of the main findings, key lessons learned and recommendations
7. Annexes: which could include Terms of reference, program of field visits, people interviewed, questionnaires, focus group discussion guides and other references etc.
8. PowerPoint presentation, in English summarizing the report for comments and discussion
9. Accompanied by any innovative social media concept or way of dissemination of key findings (i.e. short video clip)

8.0. Requirements

The consultant is required to submit an offer for the expected deliveries consisting of

- a brief, technical proposal (max 5 pages) explaining how s/he will organize the evaluation, together a CV

- as well as a brief financial proposal clearly showing the number of days required for the mid-term review, daily consultancy rates and any other costs.

The consultant should clearly demonstrate technical capacity to successfully complete the stated objectives with minimal supervision from HWA staff, the ability to present data in a concise, precise and easy to understand manner at a high professional standard of English.

HWA would highly welcome innovative approaches to the review such as inclusion of media (i.e. a short video) or any other novel or fresh ideas which make the dissemination of the findings of the mid-term review interesting and easily digestible for a wide audience of stakeholders (including the beneficiaries themselves).

9.0. Personnel required

Personnel with the following are required:

- A Masters Degree in business administration, enterprise development, forestry, environment, or other related field
- Proven monitoring and evaluation, facilitation, training and communication skills and Informed on latest best practices in Outcome Evaluation
- Skilled in questionnaire development, interview techniques and managing focus group discussions
- Relevant country and/or regional experience
- Good contextual knowledge of the Non-Timber Forest Products in Zimbabwe, regionally and internationally
- and finally, an innovative mind with the right portion of common sense and novel approaches to development work.

10.0. Reporting relationship

The consultant will report to the HWA Head of Mission.

11.0. Financial or Budget

The consultant is expected to provide his offer for the whole evaluation. Reimbursement of services will be upon the submission of the draft evaluation report and the last payment will be made after completion of the oral presentation report and delivery of the final evaluation report with comments and feedback from HWA and its partners. The total cost of services will be paid to the consultant upon successful completion of the oral presentation of the evaluation report and delivery of the final evaluation report with comments and feedback from HWA and its partners.

12.0. Contacts

Any communication for this mid-term review can be directed to Silvia Weninger, Head of Mission HWA-Zimbabwe, silvia@hwa.co.zw.